DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 028 671 FL 001 195

By-Jelavich, Charles

East Central and Southeast European Studies in the United States.

American Council of Learned Societies, New York, N.Y.; Social Science Research Council, Washington, D.C.
Pub Date Nov 68
Note-10p.
Journal Cit-ACLS Newsletter; v19 n7 p1-10 November 1968
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
Descriptors-*Area Studies, *Conference Reports, Cross Cultural Training, Cultural Awareness, Cultural Environment, Cultural Interrelationships, Educational Needs, European History, Geographic Regions, Interdisciplinary Approach, *National Surveys, Program Development, *Program Evaluation, Program Improvement, Slavic Languages, *Western Civilization
Identifiers-East Central Europe, Southeast Europe

This report concerns the results reached by the recent "Survey of East Central and Southeast European Studies," sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. Stimulated by the urgent need to understand the current significance and importance of this area and to appreciate its historic role in European civilization, this survey undertook to evaluate past American achievements in the study of the field and to make recommendations for future development. In the evaluation of the serious deficiencies existing in all disciplines in the study of the field, this discussion of the report's findings includes sections describing the purpose and organization of the survey, (2) some basic problems in the field, and (3) recommended steps to be taken in expanding and developing the field. (CW)

ED028671

From: ACLS Newsletter, Volume XIX, Number 7, November 1968

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

EAST CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES

CHARLES JELAVICH

Charles Jelavich is Professor of History at Indiana University. He is the author of Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, 1879-1886 *and co-author of* Education of a Russian Statesman: Memoirs of Nicholas Karlovich Giers *and* Russia in the East, 1876-1880. *He was a Fulbright Lecturer in Munich in 1960-1961. He has long been a member of the ACLS-SSRC Joint Committee on Slavic Studies and was instrumental in the formation of the Sub-Committee on East Central and Southeast European Studies, of which he has been chairman.*

This report concerns the results reached by the recent ACLS-SSRC "Survey of East Central and Southeast European Studies," which began in 1966 and finished in the spring of 1968. The complete report, which is 842 typed pages, and the two bibliographical volumes now nearing completion under the editorship of Paul L. Horecky will be published by the University of Chicago Press. The decision to undertake this project was made by the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies (JCSS) of the ACLS-SSRC in 1964. It was felt that, despite the obvious contemporary importance of the area, its current significance had not been adequately understood. Equally important was the fact that the area's historic role in European civilization had not been fully appreciated. In other words, serious deficiencies in the study of the field existed in all the disciplines. There was thus an urgent need to evaluate past American achievements and to make recommendations for future development.

This brief report will be divided into three sections: (1) Purpose and Organization, (2) Some Basic Problems in the Field, and (3) Recommendations.

FL 001 195

Purpose and Organization

Although it is generally assumed that American interest in East Central and Southeastern Europe (or Eastern Europe, excluding the USSR) is a post-war phenomenon, this actually is not the case. American concern almost spans the life of the republic. Americans were deeply involved in the fate of the Greek revolution, 1821-1830; they followed Kossuth's rebellion of 1848-1849; and they were aware of the Polish revolutions of 1830 and 1863. By the turn of the century they were greatly concerned with the nationalist movements in the Ottoman, Habsburg, German, and Russian empires. Both world wars had their immediate origins in this area through the assassination of the Archduke at Sarajevo and the German invasion of Poland. Of course, after 1945 the establishment of Communist rule, the dramatic emergence of Titoism,

the growth of polycentrism, and most recently the process of liberalization have attracted both American and worldwide attention. No one can minimize the significance of these current developments, the so-called revolution within communism.

Yet these events of the recent period are not the sole reason why we should concern ourselves with these lands. Eastern Europe also deserves to be studied for its own sake. Eleven Nobel Prize winners were born here. The contributions of Chopin, Paderewski, Landowska, Dvorák, Smetana, Bartók, Kodály, Lehar, Liszt, and Enescu have enriched the world of music. Mickiewicz, Reymont, Sienkiewicz, Capek, Andric, Seferis, and Kazantzakis are read throughout the world. The Polish and Hungarian schools of mathematics are renowned. In other words, these lands are part of European civilization and have contributed to its development. Historically and at present they provide a unique political, cultural, social, and economic laboratory. They have been influenced by classical Greece and Rome, Roman and Byzantine Christianity, the Ottoman Turks and Islam, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, nationalism, liberalism, the industrial revolution, and socialism. In addition, there have been direct and indirect influences from the Habsburg Empire, Prussia (Imperial Germany), and Tsarist and Soviet Russia.

With this rich and diverse historical and contemporary background Eastern Europe represents a unique field for scholarly research. An excellent illustration can be cited from the contemporary scene. For those interested in comparative studies, one cannot find a better area to investigate than the four Balkan states of Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Jugoslavia. Albania is seeking to emulate Communist China; Bulgaria follows closely the classic Soviet model; Jugoslavia is trying to fuse the best of the East and West in her politics, economics, and cultural life; while Greece ostensibly is seeking to pursue a system of free enterprise with the trappings of parliamentary democracy. Thus in these lands, covering an area less than the size of Texas, but with a population of 38,000,000, the social scientist has a unique research laboratory. American concern with these countries is justified not solely on current events, but also on a cultural, economic, religious, political and social basis.

The survey was directed and supervised by the Sub-committee on East Central and Southeast European Studies (SECSES) of the JCSS.[1] The instructions given to SECSES in 1965 by Professor Chauncy Harris, then Chairman of the JCSS, were "to examine the state of American scholarship on the countries and cultures of East Central and Southeastern Europe and to provide leadership in planning the stimulation and development of such studies." Thus the first problem which SECSES had to resolve was to identify the countries to be surveyed. This task was not simple because East Central and Southeastern Europe is not an "area" in the traditional sense, but a historical mosaic with divergent political, economic, religious, social, and cultural characteristics. By compromising

on two fundamental points of view, SECSES agreed to include Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and European Turkey.[2] Those scholars who were primarily concerned with the events in this area since 1945, that is the establishment of the communist regimes, were adamant that East Germany be included; and they would have preferred to exclude Greece and European Turkey. On the other hand those who looked at the area in its broadest historical perspective objected to the inclusion of East Germany and stressed the importance of Greece and European Turkey in Southeastern Europe. Thus they rejected the link of communist rule as the sole criterion in approaching the study of these lands.

Next SECSES agreed that the survey should examine five basic topics: (1) graduate training and research needs, (2) undergraduate instruction, (3) the problems associated with the teaching of the languages of the area, (4) "the state of the art" in fifteen disciplines—anthropology, demography, economics, folklore, ethnomusicology, geography, history, international relations, law, linguistics, literature, musicology, political science, philosophy, and sociology, and (5) the preparation of a two volume annotated bibliography of the social sciences and humanities with 6,000 titles.[3] Based upon these decisions, a specific, detailed plan was formulated which ACLS presented to the Office of Education. USOE endorsed it and agreed to subsidize the entire project.

From the outset it was recognized that the project could only be accomplished as a cooperative undertaking of American scholars working in the field, together with the assistance of some European colleagues. The surveys of undergraduate instruction and graduate training and research required travel to many institutions for direct consultations with university administrators, interested faculty, and students. It was understood that no scholar could know, or even hope to follow, the developments in his discipline for each of these countries. Therefore each survey director solicited the assistance of colleagues who were specialists on the countries which were not the director's primary field of research and teaching. Over 125 American and European scholars took part in the preparation of the bibliographic volumes. In all, over 150 scholars contributed to this undertaking, many serving in several capacities. This survey was indeed a cooperative effort of American and European scholars. The enthusiastic response to requests for assistance and the excellent cooperation in executing the project are a tribute to the importance that was attached to this undertaking.

It should also be pointed out that each "state of the art" report was examined, discussed, and criticized twice by specialists in the field before the final versions were prepared. One hundred-fifty copies of each preliminary report were distributed to the interested members of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, who were asked to send their written evaluations to the appropriate author. Subsequently, a two-day meeting in New York, attended by sixty scholars and foundation and government officials, discussed the revised drafts.

Some Basic Problems of the Field

Although the survey was concerned with assessing past achievements, its primary aim was to determine the needs of the field and to decide how to meet them if the academic and national goal of training 200-400 Ph.Ds. was to be reached in the next decade. It would be misleading not to mention some of the successes of the past two decades. The most obvious is the fact that every language of the area—Polish, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Albanian, modern Greek, Turkish, Slovene, Slovak, Macedonian, and even Lausation and Kashubian—is being or has been taught in the United States in the past five years. Prior to 1941 only Polish, Czech, and Serbo-Croatian enjoyed this distinction. These new developments are a direct result of the establishment of over twenty institutes or centers at universities for the study of the USSR and Eastern Europe, most of whom have received substantial subsidies from foundations. Without this assistance some of the institutes and centers could not have been established or could not have survived. These universities, together with a number of others, awarded over 375 M.A. degrees in fourteen disciplines and approximately 180 Ph.Ds. in twelve disciplines. Of the doctorates, 165 were in six disciplines: history (53), linguistics (38), political science (24), economics (23), international relations (16), and literature (11). The academic exchange programs, especially those of the Ford Foundation and the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), have been a great stimulus to the development of studies on Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Jugoslavia, and more recently Bulgaria and Rumania. Equally important has been the faculty fellowship support of ACLS-SSRC and the federal fellowship programs for students under various titles of the Education Act. In other words, a good base has been created upon which to expand our knowledge of these lands.

A careful examination of the "state of the arts" of the area revealed, however, that fundamental problems in East European studies existed. In fact, an interesting and valid parallel can be drawn between the historical evolution of these lands and the emergence of East European studies in the United States. Just as these small, geographically exposed countries were dominated by foreign powers, were shaped by alien influences, and were the objects rather than the subjects of history, so in the post-war era it was the American preoccupation with the Soviet Union and the "cold war," the study of Communism and its impact in Eastern Europe that largely dictated why, when, and how we should include these countries in our academic curriculum. This development was responsible for many of the achievements cited above. But it also produced adverse results which must now be rectified.

The first problem is that the East European field has too often been studied in association with Russian-Soviet studies. Although this approach has validity for the era since 1945, historically it is inaccurate and misleading. In fact, non-Russian influences have been more decisive in the area as a whole. Because of this emphasis not only did the general

public come to believe that these lands traditionally were a part of the Russian-Soviet sphere, but this impression gained ascendancy among university students, uninformed faculty members, university administrators, and foundation officials. It must be stressed that there was no deliberate plan to bring about this result. It simply was the product of the post-war era. Let us now look at some of its effects.

In our survey there was unanimity on one major point—the need to improve language instruction and to offer courses on a regular basis. Without a knowledge of the languages of the area, East European studies cannot advance. At present a major obstacle exists to further progress in this direction. Most of the Slavic languages of the area are now taught on the assumption that the student has already acquired a knowledge of Russian. Although Russian is not the "mother" Slavic language from which the others developed, great progress has been made in the study and teaching of this subject. It is much easier to teach another Slavic language to a student thoroughly prepared in Russian. The student in the East European field is almost compelled to learn Russian whether or not it is important to his program. Moreover, the classes are usually taught for the benefit of future language teachers and not for the student who wishes to acquire the language as a tool for his research. Consequently, at least two years of additional graduate work are imposed on the student who must follow this procedure.

For most of these students the learning of Russian is not an immediate necessity for their studies in the East European area, where other languages are in most instances more essential for research and study. When forty scholars were asked to list the most important non-native languages for the study of their country of specialization for the years since 1500, Russian was cited as the first for only one country—Bulgaria.[5] German was mentioned as first for Poland, Hungary, Jugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. French held this position in Greece and Rumania, and Italian in Albania. Even as a second language, French was considered more important than Russian in Poland, Hungary, Jugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, whereas German was second in Albania and Rumania.[6] Latin and Turkish were also prominently mentioned. For Albania, Hungary, Rumania, and Greece, Russian was not even third. What these facts show is the low priority which a knowledge of Russian holds for the study of this area in the broadest historical sense—in anthropology, economics, geography, law, literature, political science, international relations, history, etc. However, under the present system, if a student's primary interest is not centered in the past two decades, or on a topic which specifically involves Russian relations with or influence on these lands, he finds he must usually learn a language of lesser importance to his field. For instance, a student whose research interest is 18th century Bohemian economic history is virtually compelled to learn Russian when Czech, German, and Latin, not Russian, are essential to his topic. It is vital, therefore, that courses in all the Slavic languages be set up on an independent basis and that they be offered for more

than one year. Although a student can probably learn to work with these languages after a year of study, particularly if he has had Russian for three or four years, this method of organization is not conducive to the development of the East European field as a whole.

The non-Slavic languages—Albanian, modern Greek, Hungarian, and Rumanian—face even more difficult problems. With the exception of Hungarian, whose study benefited from the events of 1956, these languages have been almost totally neglected, or they are taught at most for a year; rarely, if ever, for two years. The cumulative effect has been that serious training and research on the non-Slavic countries is almost completely overlooked in virtually all the disciplines. In fact, for all of Eastern Europe, only Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia have received reasonable attention—the same countries that were studied before the war.

With this general situation in the field, other obvious problems exist. With several exceptions, there are no adequate grammars, readers, dictionaries, or tapes for language study. In other disciplines, too, the survey directors reported the need for basic textbooks either on a national, regional, or area-wide basis. The conclusion to be drawn is that the tools for instruction are inadequate or non-existent for all the disciplines.

Our field also suffers in library holdings and library personnel. Most of the post-war acquisitions have been for Russian-Soviet materials. Again, for the favored states of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia, extensive purchases have been made, but not for the other countries. However the Polish, Czech, and Jugoslav collections are only good in a few disciplines, for example, history, literature, and linguistics. Whereas a Russian or Slavic librarian can usually handle most of the materials for the Slavic states, few if any libraries can afford the luxury of a special librarian for each of the non-Slavic countries which lack a common linguistic denominator.

Because of these problems and others discussed in greater detail in the full report, East European studies have been seriously handicapped. Lacking the necessary tools and teachers and being subordinate to Soviet studies, they have not been able to compete with the more highly developed and favored fields. Moreover, the committees administering the Russian-East European programs, whether they be for planning, development, fellowships, etc. were usually composed exclusively of Russian-Soviet specialists. Understandably, they appreciated better the needs of their field than those of the East European area. The result has been that a senior scholar in the Russian field with 10-15 years teaching experience and a good publication record would compete for the same fellowships or travel grants with the beginning scholar in the East European field. The obvious disadvantages of this situation, the product of the post-war international scene, meant that East European studies could not achieve their full potential. The inequality of this

situation is better understood when one realizes that East European studies today are roughly in the same stage of development that Russian studies were between 1950 and 1955.

Recommendations

The committee made the following recommendations as steps which should be taken to expand and develop the field. Because of limitations of space and the very uneven development of the field it is not possible to discuss the many unique recommendations in regard to individual disciplines, but only those which cover the area as a whole and the majority of the disciplines.

1. Centers or Institutes

There should be at least three, but not more than five, centers or institutes in the United States which should endeavor to provide a comprehensive area program with training in all the basic languages and graduate work in at least five disciplines.

Other institutions should specialize on a region, for example, the Balkans or East Central Europe, or, in rare instances, on a country, such as Poland. Whereas survey courses on all of Eastern Europe should be taught, the research and training emphasis, faculty recruitment as well as library acquisitions should concentrate on one of the regions.

2. Summer Language Institutes

The only feasible way in which to solve the complex and difficult problem of language study is to have regular summer language institutes. This solution has been successful for the study of the Middle Eastern area where the problems are very much like ours. A number of these institutes should be held every year. The major languages—Polish, Czech, and Serbo-Croatian—should be taught each year, along with several of the others so that at least once every two years Hungarian, Albanian, Rumanian, modern Greek, and Bulgarian would be offered. These should be available to students and to those faculty members who wish to learn another language of the area.

Students and faculty should also be encouraged to attend the summer language institutes for foreigners which now operate in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Jugoslavia. The exposure to the language and local environment is a great stimulus to the student's linguistic development. This year the ACLS inaugurated a program which awarded thirty-one fellowships to graduate students and faculty for this purpose.

3. Summer Institutes for the Study of the Area, a Region or a Country

The language institutes can be organized either separately or jointly with an area program open to graduate students and interested faculty.

The area program should emphasize special courses and offerings not normally found in a university curriculum. East European scholars should be included in the teaching staff.

Since Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Rumanian studies have been largely neglected, at least one special summer institute for each country should be held within the next five years. The program should include language training and offerings in three to five disciplines and an interdisciplinary seminar. Several scholars from the relevant countries should be invited to take part in the instruction.

4. Teaching Aids and Materials

A careful reading of the two reports on language instruction reveals the magnitude of this problem. Funds must be provided to enable competent, trained linguists to prepare grammars, readers, dictionaries, and tapes for all the languages. With several exceptions, the present tools are inadequate, are poorly prepared, or do not even exist. Without these aids, East European studies will continue at their present rate of growth instead of achieving the rapid acceleration that is mandatory.

The reports for each discipline stressed the need for basic textbooks. In some fields none exist; whereas in others the works available are either brief, or they employ outmoded techniques and interpretations, or they are intentionally or unintentionally biased. These new surveys can also be used in undergraduate instruction at those institutions which do not have centers, but which produce more than fifty percent of the beginning graduate students in the field. The survey revealed that the area suffers not from lack of interest on the part of students and faculty, but from the absence of elementary, basic textbooks. Even in history, the most developed discipline, the available national histories are largely outdated and usually political in emphasis.

5. Cooperative Projects involving European Scholars

The survey demonstrated the need for cooperative endeavors. The directors pointed out specific areas where American scholarship can benefit through close contact with West European and East European scholars and institutes. Translations of standard works and joint research projects are feasible. A number of scholars and institutions have launched successful programs involving cooperation with East European institutes.

6. Academic Exchanges

Together with the need for summer language institutes, the continuation and expansion of academic exchanges was endorsed unanimously. The greatest stimulus to East European studies in the post-war period has been the accessibility of the East European states in the past three to five years to scholars and graduate students. Archival research, field work, summer travel, conferences, etc., all of which are now possible with limited or no restrictions, have changed the character of East

European studies. The present exchange programs—Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, Ford Foundation, Fulbright, and individual university arrangements—all deserve the strongest support and encouragement. Their continued operation can determine the degree of success East European studies will have in the next decade.

7. Conferences

Closely associated with the development of exchanges has been the rapid increase in the number of scholarly conferences in Eastern Europe. The meetings held recently in Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Jugoslavia have been remarkably devoid of political overtones. Their purpose has been primarily the exchange of scholarly views. Scholars from all of Europe, not just Eastern Europe, have attended these meetings which have been of inestimable value. Similar conferences have not been held before, even in the inter-war period. Funds therefore are urgently needed to maintain these most important undertakings.

8. Underdeveloped Disciplines

The problem of how to develop the so-called underdeveloped disciplines confronts all area study programs. The prospects for these disciplines have improved immeasurably in recent years because of the accessibility of the East European states and the fact that they provide truly unique social, economic, and political laboratories for scholarly research. Anthropology, demography, folklore, ethnomusicology, geography, law, and literature, as well as the other disciplines, will all benefit from this new development. Support for these disciplines is essential because of the importance of field work to all of them.

Some survey directors have urged the financing of the establishment of a single center in the United States for their discipline or an endowed chair as the best means of strengthening these subjects.

9. Fellowships for Graduate Students and Faculty

Because it takes at least two years longer for the completion of the doctorate in the East European field than in the Russian and West European, fellowship support is an inescapable necessity. Whereas today it is possible to write an original doctoral dissertation in many disciplines in the Russian field without going abroad, because our library holdings in published sources, special archival collections, and secondary sources are very good—this is not the case for the East European field. Unless the student goes to Eastern Europe or to the great repositories in Vienna, Paris, or London, it is virtually impossible for him to complete an original piece of research. In other words, students should not be encouraged to enter the East European field unless there is a very good possibility that if they attain an excellent graduate record, they will be able to obtain a fellowship to enable them to spend at least a year abroad in research, with an additional six months in which to write their dissertation.

The same considerations are applicable for faculty fellowships and grants-in-aid. Much can be accomplished in the three summer months, since East European states do have adequate microfilming facilities. Thus summer grants, with funds for microfilming, are vital. Because the archival material is not always well organized and because it is a fact that little can be done by correspondence in Eastern Europe, the scholar must himself study the materials. Travel funds, fellowships, and grants-in-aid are vital.

10. Survey of Library Holdings in the United States

Although it was not possible for SECSES to make a survey of the fundamental problems affecting East European holdings in our libraries, the committee is acutely aware of the need for such an undertaking. Our holdings are meager in some fields, non-existent in others, but at the same time we do have strength in history and literature, especially for three or four of the countries. There are even several unique collections in the United States. What is needed is a careful evaluation of all the relevant problems associated with the development of good basic collections so that at least somewhere in the United States we will have such necessary resources as a set of the major periodicals, complete files of the standard newspapers, etc. SECSES has appointed a new committee to go into all aspects of the problems associated with the development and expansion of our library resources.

11. The Administration of the East European Field by East European Specialists

In order to achieve the goal of training three to four hundred Ph.Ds by the end of the next decade, the planning, development, and implementation of East Central and Southeast European studies must be carried out by those scholars who devote their full time to teaching and research in this area. They are best qualified to determine and establish priorities, allocate funds, award fellowships, and evaluate achievements. They too are best able to determine what the proper training should be in this field. In particular, they will be able to formulate a balanced program which guarantees that all the factors and influences will be studied to assure the correct understanding of this field. Although this procedure will mean the creation of a few additional committees, there is no doubt that East Central and Southeast European studies will benefit immeasurably. In fact, this recommendation is the key to the future success of the entire field.

In conclusion, no period since 1945 is as favorable as the present for the development and expansion of this field of interest. Yet it must be stressed that whereas East Central and Southeastern Europe has been labeled at times as an "exotic" field, it has no need now of "exotic" plans or programs. Before more adventurous undertakings are to be contemplated, a firm base is required. The improvement must be made first in the tools essential for study. It is only through the preparation of such materials that the basic knowledge of the area can be gained.